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PRESS RELEASE

3RD MEB ARRIVES IN BANGLADESH TO AID SIDR VICTIMS

Story by: Cpl. Eric D. Arndt

DHAKA, NOVEMBER 27 -- The 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade staff arrived here Nov. 23 to begin leading U.S. military relief efforts in the wake of Cyclone Sidr, which ravaged the country's southern coast Nov. 15.

More than 3,000 people were killed and nearly one million were displaced by the storm.

"We are working with the Bangladeshi government to provide rapid humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to the areas they deem most in need," said Brig. Gen. Ronald Bailey, 3rd MEB commanding general.

The United States has significant military capability in the region to support those efforts, including the USS Kearsarge (LHD-3) and its embarked 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit.

The Kearsarge arrived off the coast of Bangladesh Nov. 23 and provided the first delivery of U.S. aid to the nation later that same day.

Other U.S. assets in the region include Army medical teams and Air Force C-130 aircraft that are being used to move supplies.

U.S. military efforts are in support of a larger United States response to the Bangladeshi government's request for assistance. The U.S. effort is coordinated by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Dhaka through the Disaster Assistance Relief Team (DART) and the U.S. Embassy.

"We normally train to fight, but to take that training and those tools and equipment and knowledge and use them for helping others is completely different," said Sgt Timothy S. Bryant, the 3rd MEB journal clerk. "It's cool to get these people help, and it's kind of a testament to our versatility that we can use the same assets for different missions."

The first order of business for U.S. forces was delivering badly-needed water to remote areas. On Nov. 26 alone, the U.S. military delivered 5,000 five-gallon water of jugs to the southern part of the country.

Another priority includes delivering approximately 160 metric tons of food, tents and clothing to Barisal, in the southern part of the country, for further distribution.

The Bangladeshi government decides what types of aid is most important and the areas it's most needed. Delivery efforts are then coordinated in combined planning meetings between Bangladeshi and U.S. officials.

"Together, [we will make sure] this gets done as professionally as possible and that we do not waste any time," said General Moeen U Ahmed, the Bangladesh Army Chief of Staff. "We, together, will not allow a single man or woman to die of starvation."

A Bangla version of this press release will be forthcoming.

PHOTO CAPTIONS



DHAKA, Bangladesh – Air Force Staff Sgt. Robert C. Ward unloads an Interagency Emergency Health Kit from a 1st Marine Air Wing KC-130 Hercules aircraft here Nov. 24. The IEHK contains essential medicines and medical devices necessary to support the health needs of 10,000 people for three months. The KC-130 arrived in the late evening, loaded with the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade staff, the IEHK, and other humanitarian supplies. 3rd MEB is leading U.S. military efforts as part of a larger United States response in support of the Bangladeshi government's request for assistance following the devastation caused by Cyclone Sidr. Sidr struck the southern coast of Bangladesh Nov. 15. The U.S. effort is being coordinated by the Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development.



DHAKA, Bangladesh – An Interagency Emergency Health Kit is unloaded from a 1st Marine Air Wing KC-130 Hercules aircraft here Nov. 24. The IEHK contains essential medicines and medical devices necessary to support the health needs of 10,000 people for three months. The KC-130 arrived in the late evening, loaded with the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade staff, the IEHK, and other humanitarian supplies. 3rd MEB is leading U.S. military efforts as part of a larger United States response in support of the Bangladeshi government's request for assistance following the devastation caused by Cyclone Sidr. Sidr struck the southern coast of Bangladesh Nov. 15. The U.S. effort is being coordinated by the Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development.



DHAKA, Bangladesh – Brigadier General Ronald Bailey, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade commanding general, overlooks his notes prior to a meeting with General Moeen U Ahmed, the Bangladesh Army Chief of Staff, Nov. 26. Bailey, along with other senior Bangladesh and American military officers and civilian officials, met to discuss and coordinate plans for the continued distribution of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to victims of Cyclone Sidr.



DHAKA, Bangladesh – Marine Brigadier General Ronald Bailey, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade commanding general, speaks with (from left) Denise Rollins, Geeta Pasi, and General Moeen U Ahmed here, Nov. 26. Bailey, along with other senior Bangladesh and American military officers and U.S. officials, met to discuss and coordinate plans for the continued distribution of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to victims of Cyclone Sidr. Rollins is the United States Agency for International Development/Bangladesh mission director, Pasi is the U.S. Embassy Dhaka Chargé d’Affaires, a.i., and Ahmed is the Bangladesh Army Chief of Staff.

